



## **Dialogue with Transport Minister, Government of Rajasthan on Challenges and Opportunities in Effective Enforcement of Road Safety in Rajasthan**

In the first-ever ‘Dialogue with Transport Minister, Rajasthan on road safety’ during this pandemic period in 2020, CUTS International organised this dialogue with Pratap Singh Khachariyawas on ‘Effective Enforcement of Key Risk Factors: Opportunities and Challenges’ on November 26, 2020, on a virtual platform.

While speaking on the provision of enhanced penalty in MVA 2019, the honourable Minister said that the Government of Rajasthan has formed various road safety committees at various levels and is working well. The Government of Rajasthan is following the Tamil Nadu model, which is suitable for road safety. The government is making road safety community leaders at the village and *Gram Panchayat* level, which will surely bring ground level changes in road safety scenario.

Khachariyawas expressed his deep sense of sorrow on each life being lost in road accidents in the State and was concerned about the country's increased number of road accidents. Road safety is a shared responsibility of all the stakeholders, including all the key stakeholders of government, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, and common road users at large. Rajasthan has given strong directions to India's National Highways Authority and state transport to take road safety measures immediately. He underlined the importance of self-discipline among all road users. He said that self-discipline is maintained on the road as a moral duty towards himself and a national responsibility. He further said though there are five key risk factors in road safety, the lack of self-discipline among road users is also one of the primary reasons for accidents.

He further said though there are five key risk factors in road safety, the lack of self-discipline among road users is also one of the primary reasons for accidents. He shared his experiences of meeting the road safety victims and knowing about these crash survivors' miseries and

sufferings in their daily lives. He ensured that the government is taking the much-needed steps to improve roads' conditions and remove the black spots in the State and penalising officers who are liable for non-maintenance of roads contributing to causing accidents.

He invited the ideas and concrete plans from the CUTS International and Road Safety Network (RSN) in India, including IIT Kharagpur, IIT Mumbai, Save life Foundation, Parisar, Pune, CEE, Ahmedabad, CAG, Chennai, Consumer Voice. These dealt with the road safety issues and ensured taking a look and implementing it in Rajasthan.

The session started with the introductory remarks by George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International introduced the Minister in brief. He spoke about the road safety statistics and said that India has the dubious distinction and stands globally in road accidents. He spoke about the increased number of road accidents in 2019. Around 1,51,113 died on the road and for the last 10 years, around 1.5 billion people died in road accidents. In the national tally, Rajasthan holds 7<sup>th</sup> position in terms of road accidents and road crashes.

George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS International, moderated the webinar and spoke about five key risk factors of road safety: high speed, drunk driving; failure to wear helmets and seat belts; child restraints, and not obeying the road safety rules.

Cheriyan said CUTS, being part of Road Safety Network, has organised several webinars. Hon'ble Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari participated in a webinar organised by CUTS on November 08, 2020, and provided a vision of reducing India's road accidents by 50 percent by 2025. Gadkari appreciated the Government of Rajasthan's efforts to take adequate measures in the area of road safety. In 2019, speeding caused 67.3 percent of accidents, resulting in 1,01,723 deaths; not wearing helmets caused 29.82 percent of accidents and 45,066 deaths.

In 2019, in Rajasthan, over-speeding caused 19,889 accidents and 9050 deaths; not wearing helmets caused 1714 deaths; not wearing seat belts caused 840 deaths second-highest in India. However, there are specific positive points as well.

In 2020, in the first quarter from January-March, there was a reduction of 8 percent of accidents. In the second quarter from April-June 2020, there was a reduction of 49.93 percent of the decline of deaths and 1,488 people lost their lives. Hence, there is a need to do more analysis if this reduction is because of the new MVA Act 2019 or lockdown.

More than 50 participants from across the states, IITs, NITs, traffic and transport officials, road safety experts, consumer organisations, and media representatives participated in the webinar.